

Survivors by **confessions.of.katijane**

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Summary: At the end of the line, Bill & Beverly say goodbye.

Survivors

I just finished this book for the first time, & it's really stayed with me since. I hated how they forgot one another (even though I understood why), & I was especially sad Bill/Beverly didn't get any kind of a send-off (even though, again, I understood why). So I wrote this tiny scene for myself.

He's already forgetting her.

He senses this somewhere as he closes the door on her yellow taxi cab, and they share that last look through a rain-streaked window; her on the inside, him on a sidewalk outside the Derry Town House. He isn't sure what's been lost there, but he knows it has been. And he knows that soon afterward, everything else will follow.

The perfunctory conversation that had preceded this final gaze told him that she was flying back to Chicago to file a missing persons report on a husband she no longer remembered, and then to Nebraska to be with Ben. So he was right, in a way. Ben was the one to take the girl home in the end.

But oh, Beverly, he thinks as her eyes blaze into his through that taxi cab window, I loved you once. I did. It was something that was both too late and too soon, and for better or worse it was finished in that building behind us less than twenty-four hours before.

He could never let her in completely back then. He'd always been too busy being Big Bill, the one the Losers looked to when the night was a little too dark and the wind blew a little too strong. He hadn't understood the fluttering feeling in his chest until the day in the house on Niebolt Street when she had torn her blouse. Her eyes blazed then as they did last night, and did now. He had lived in that moment, loved that moment because in a way, it had promised so much more. But in the end, that was all there was. Even the moments in the pipes underneath the city were somehow obscured by that look that had been in her eyes then.

And now he had a catatonic wife (*Good God, she was catatonic*), and a life to go back to, a fulfilling career thousands of miles away from

this rain-soaked town that would soon fade into nothing more than a distant memory. The cabbie switches the gear into drive, and Beverly's head bobs with the movement of the car. His mouth falls open slightly, maybe to say goodbye, but he's suddenly too taken by the finality of the moment and the way her eyes seem to dim as they follow his. Her head turns to hold the gaze, but it's gone in the eight seconds it takes to make her face nothing more than a dim outline lost in a gray afternoon.

He watches the taxi until it crosses the Kissing Bridge, and then disappears between the greenery belts mandated by the city of Derry to stand by the roadway. And then, in a few moments, he wonders dimly why he's standing in the rain when Audra is inside alone. He turns to open the glass hotel door, and is suddenly overwhelmed by the sensation that something important has just left his life forever.

Over the years, this feeling fades into nothing more than a tiny hole in Bill's heart, one he doesn't even remember is there until Audra's long red hair falls into her face a certain way, or he sees a yellow taxi cab on a rainy day. He remembers torn fabric, on a worn blouse, perhaps, but nothing more.

But he knows when he takes out his wallet and a yellowed scrap of newspaper happens to catch his eye, he very briefly feels whole again. He doesn't remember the red-haired woman he is embracing in the photograph, but he feels taken by it, and taken by the one word printed underneath:

Survivors.